9-11 Sept 74

Dog Michael

agalmata

c/o Calvary Nursing Home
Sudbury Hill
Harrow-on-the-Hill
Middlesex

Wednesday nov. 11th

Monday Sept 9th 1974

Dearest René,

I write this & enclose Middle Sea & Lear Sea typescript & ask you to forgive the truly awful illegible, scrawled remarks I made round the margins — some in red, but I had to write these rambling comments so small & my eyes sometimes trouble me & then I have to scratch out so many words — that I have ~~said~~ found it necessary to write what I wanted to say on a [illegible] seperate sheet [illegible] to give me more space for what I wanted to say. Even so I fear my writing is pretty awful. I enclose a sheet on the Bolerium, Ocrinum, & Lands end, Lizard business. I still cannot find my map of Roman Britain, blast it. But I hope the messy attempt to explain what I intended.

I've just received your letter on 6th Sept. 74. It is as I feared about agalma, I knew it was singular [illegible], but did not know the plural — I asked a bloke who knew Greek but he forgot to let me know. — I knew Homer had used agalma of something precious in the sense I wanted, but dont think I would have used ~~the~~ agalmata even if I had known it as would not fit into the passage on page 73 of the Sleeping Lord. But it just shows you how lack of scholarship can play one up. The tall stemmed ffion (foxgloves) is a masculine noun, but is used as a girl's name Ffion. Valerie's second daughter is named Ffion. It appears to be used of red flowers in the singular or the plural.

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But this agalma for agalmata is ~~an awful~~ just a lack of scholarship on my part. Blast it. Well it can't be helped now. The maddening thing is that I knew it should be in the plural. Incidentally on the opposite page to the error over agalma, that is to say page 72 (middle of page)

"There's no resisting here:

the Word (if) made Fire

should, of course, read

the Word is made Fire

that was a printer's error that I noticed too late to get corrected.

In yr letter 7-9-73 that came this morning. You say that a letter you sent me after receiving, Rite & Foretime — that is an awful bore it may I suppose yet turn up, but the Rite & Foretime bit was sent back to you I should think ten days or more ago — of course the posts are very odd, & letters do really get lost nowadays — we used to say a letter that has not arrived is a letter never sent, but that alas is no longer true. Well I hope to God this letter and Middle Sea & Lear sea enclosed gets to you safely.

I had intended to enclose Angle-Land as well but had better hold that until I know This letter and Angle Land have got to you safely.

A general remark. I'm very glad you make it clear that there are centuries of time separating Middle-Sea & Lear Sea from Angle-land for I know from remarks in letters etc that the skipper who eventually made Mount's Bay was the same bloke that took his craft from the 'wide gusset' of La Manche* to the Narrows [illegible] cuff at the Strait of Dover.

* rather amusing

When the ~~brilliant~~ brilliant French girl did her thesis at the Sorbonne and took The Anathemata as her special subject, she was amazingly ~~[illegible]~~ perceptive of ~~[illegible]~~ a great deal of the stuff but could not cotton on to what 'The Sleeve' meant & laughed much when I said well, don't you call the English Channel, La Manche in French — she ~~[illegible]~~ said, yes, of course, but that's one of the strange things about language — the obvious things escape one.

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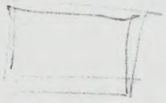
This can't be posted now until tomorrow, ~~Wednesday~~ Tuesday 10th Sept, as the kind person who posts my letters has gone home. I could give it to someone else but she takes it to the post office & ~~is always~~ never forgets. But I *am* very sorry about your letter to me on receipt of the [illegible] typescript *Rite & Fortune*. I'll look through all the letters I can find, but I don't hold out much hope because I remember asking you a bit back if you had seen those typescript pages. You can't recall I suppose if your letter was in an ordinary oblong



buff colour envelope such as the one I got the money. No bloody ruler here with inches etc marked with me here — about size I suppose in my dugout at Monkdene — all sorts of odds & ends one took for granted. apart fr ref. books ~~it~~ is a confounded handicap. / However, nothing served by moaning. How interesting that [illegible] Joan & yourself should have been [illegible] recalling that house where my parents (lux perpetua luceat eis) lived. I did not know ~~that~~ confounded terrier howled when Joan tried to play ~~her harp~~. on her harp. I apologise on behalf of the family, to her. The only thing I do clearly remember about that dog — well two things — one nice, the other nasty (to use Taplow lingo) I was, in I suppose 1919, in bed with a damned severe bout of influenza in my little room with a lot of engravings & water colour drawings and was [illegible] running a pretty high temperature & ~~had been~~ not been about the house for a week or more, when one evening to my astonishment that dog, ~~decided~~ I suppose, to investigate, anyway he pushed the door open & found me in bed & came over & licked my hands & my face & wagged his tail and departed.

with a look of contentment on his face. My mother told me he had been nosing about the house for some days as though he knew something was wrong & had eventually ~~discov~~ discovered my whereabouts. 'Cripes,' I thought, 'Kiss me 'Ardy'. - The other incident was decidedly other. It was some years later, as I came back from London rather late, probably having spent the evening with you ~~at Old Coldwell;~~ during the period when you were at the Old Coldwell, or maybe at Toms or Harmans in Chelsea. My parents were out ~~at~~ some church affair when I came into the house & that confounded dog ~~had~~ made himself comfortable on some cushion on the sofa in the front room. I switched on the light and told the dog to go down to his basket in the kitchen or scullery or wherever it was that he ordinarily slept. However, instead of doing as I bid him, he raised his head & bared his ancient teeth & snarled in a fashion that I did not at all like. Being by nature easily afraid and having a particular fear of dogs large or small, I thought well, this won't do at all. Coward or no, I ~~[illegible]~~ must somehow put in practice the 'primacy of action' and immediately, or that dog will never again do as he's told and moreover he ~~might~~ may use those bared teeth on me, now which I did not think at all fancy. So after a further order which was met by a further snarl, I gave the creature a whack, not hard, but with ~~[illegible]~~ an ash walking stick, across his ~~[illegible]~~ muzzle — the effect was very prompt ~~[illegible]~~ & very satisfactory, for he came down from the sofa & went straight to his sleeping-basket and ~~[illegible]~~ there was no further trouble from him as far as I was concerned, anyway. But I afterwards never felt quite at ease with him — I think I feared he might choose his time to counter attack!

As far as I can remember I recounted what had occurred to my father & mother. They could hardly credit it as the dog had consistently been amiable & obedient but my father as far as I can recall said, well Mike the dog ~~was~~ is getting on in years ~~&~~ so tends to change & probably ~~[illegible]~~ your coming in suddenly when he was comfortable on the sofa, resented being disturbed. But my mother said – you know David has always been afraid of dogs, in this, if in no other way, he resembles his grandfather (EGB.) who ~~was~~ if afraid of little else, was very much afraid of dogs ~~so~~ to the extent that if he saw a dog in (naming a street) that chanced to be a short cut to St Mary's Ch. or his ship-yard or what not, would walk a quarter of a mile ~~by~~ or more by another route, rather than ~~change~~ chance getting a ~~bite from~~ dog-bite – he made no attempt to disguise this fear, nor could he account for it,' she said. ~~But~~ But added that dogs ~~were~~ tended to be more fierce ~~in~~ those earlier decades, less under control, & dog-fights were a ~~daily~~ frequent sight – indeed a daily sight not only in or around dockland, but in ~~[illegible]~~ any area. Why, I can't recall when ~~[illegible]~~ I last saw a dog-fight." My father would smilingly say, "Well Alice,

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I suppose, ~~with~~ the progress toward greater civility & urbanisation, has affected the behaviour of the canine breed as well. ~~[illegible]~~ I remember at home in Treffynnon, ~~&~~ in the farmlands round about dogs were ~~[illegible]~~ more inclined to bite as well as bark, for they were kept to protect property & were, as you say, more fierce, I think. Then there was ~~the~~ difficulty with dogs & sheep. Do you recall how Joe (my father's brother) beat his dog unmercifully because it went toward some sheep near St Trillo's Ch. when we were staying up there some years back. And he a most kind, meek man, but if a dog was thought to have ~~[illegible]~~ attacked a sheep there was always trouble with the owner of the sheep or else legal action was taken. Must shut ~~[illegible]~~ up with these ~~[illegible]~~ tales of some good time back.

I can't imagine how you were ever at ~~[illegible]~~ Xmas Midnight Mass that church received a direct hit during the blitz. I was told this after, and they said the rector was seen wringing his ~~[illegible]~~ hands & weeping by the ruin. It was served by three ~~Assum~~ Assumptionist ~~priest~~ priests ~~[illegible]~~ one a Londoner & the other ~~two~~ two French and one of the Frenchmen, called F. Bernardine, was a marvellous man ~~he~~ looked like a French infantryman & I had a special regard & affection for him. I could talk easily about him. His sermons were ~~[illegible]~~ never more than five to ten minutes but always dead on the target — he had a great influence on me — but can't go on here.

Much love to Joan & to you René Annwyl

Yours as ever Dai.